

OPERATIONAL CLARITY
WORKBOOK

Founder Decision Bottleneck Starter Kit

See where routine decisions still depend on you. Define what your team can own, when they should consult you, and what truly requires escalation.

5

TOOLS

1

NORMAL WEEK

The business may be completing tasks while still depending on the owner to supply context, approve exceptions, and make the same decisions again. This kit makes that dependency visible.

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Clarity. Structure. Capacity.

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How to Use This Kit

Use one normal week of real questions, approvals, corrections, and exceptions. Do not answer from memory alone. Capture what actually returns to you.

1	Score the dependency	Rate the eight statements using the last 30 days.
2	Log what returns	Track seven days of real decision requests and exceptions.
3	Assign decision rights	Define who owns the decision and the limits of that authority.
4	Set escalation thresholds	Write the risk, cost, and exception that require your involvement.
5	Choose the first pattern	Fix one recurring category before expanding the work.

This kit identifies the first decision pattern to address. It does not replace the full diagnostic, architecture, leadership alignment, or build-ready roadmap in the Operational Certainty Installation.

TOOL 1

Founder Dependency Scorecard

Rate each statement from 1 (rarely true) to 5 (consistently true). Use the last 30 days, not the business you hope to have.

STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
Recurring questions reach me before the team checks a written rule.					
Work slows or pauses when I am unavailable.					
Routine approvals return to me throughout the week.					
My team is unclear about what it can decide without me.					
I spend more time resolving recurring issues than designing better rules.					
Important operating context still lives mainly in my head.					
Exceptions have no written threshold for when to act, consult, or escalate.					
Delegated work often returns to me for checking, correction, or rework.					

TOTAL SCORE _____ / 40

INTERPRET YOUR SCORE

What the Total Suggests

The score directs your attention. The seven-day log confirms the pattern.

8–18	Localized dependency	One or two workflows are likely returning decisions to you. Start with the repeated category that creates the most delay.
19–29	Concentrated dependency	Several recurring decisions lack clear owners or boundaries. Use the log and matrix before adding tools or meetings.
30–40	High dependency	Decision ownership and exception handling are unclear across the business. A broader diagnostic and architecture engagement may be appropriate.

Which two statements received your highest scores?

What happened recently that makes those scores accurate?

TOOL 2

Seven-Day Decision Return Log

For seven days, record every question, approval, correction, and exception that reaches you. Use one line per decision. Do not fix the whole pattern while tracking it.

CAPTURE	WHAT TO WRITE
The request	What decision was the person asking you to make?
The source	Who brought it to you, and what had they already tried?
The return reason	Missing rule, unclear owner, risk, cost, exception, or habit?
The disposition	Founder-only, team-owned, consultative, escalated, standardizable, or eliminable?

At the end of the week, group similar entries. Repetition is the signal. A repeated question usually means the operating rule is missing, unclear, or difficult to find.

DAYS 1-3

Decision Return Log

DAY / TIME	DECISION THAT RETURNED	WHO ASKED	WHY IT RETURNED	CATEGORY

DAYS 4-7

Decision Return Log

DAY / TIME	DECISION THAT RETURNED	WHO ASKED	WHY IT RETURNED	CATEGORY

TOOL 3

Decision Rights Mini-Matrix

Choose the eight most repeated decisions from your log. Define who owns each one, what authority that person holds, when consultation is useful, and what truly requires escalation.

DECISION	OWNER	AUTHORITY	CONSULT WHEN	ESCALATE WHEN

Authority examples: decide independently; decide within a dollar limit; decide after checking the written standard; recommend and receive approval.

TOOL 4

Escalation Threshold Worksheet

Escalation is not failure. Undefined escalation is the problem. Write thresholds that a team member can recognize before contacting you.

Risk threshold

What level of safety, legal, client, quality, or reputation risk requires the owner?

Cost threshold

What dollar amount, margin impact, or resource commitment requires approval?

Exception threshold

What conditions make the normal rule inapplicable? Who decides the exception?

The decision should reach the owner only when the threshold is met—not because asking feels safer.

TOOL 5

Choose the First Decision Pattern

Use evidence from the scorecard and log. Choose one recurring category with meaningful cost, high repetition, and a rule that can be tested within 30 days.

The decision pattern I will address first

What is happening now

The new decision owner

The authority this person will hold

The escalation threshold

30-DAY TEST

Install One Rule and Measure It

BASELINE	30-DAY TARGET
How many times did this decision return to you last week?	How many returns will indicate the rule is working?
What was the typical time to decide?	What decision time is acceptable?
How often did you correct or reverse the result?	What quality standard must remain true?

Review weekly for four weeks. If the same decision continues to return, determine whether the rule is unclear, the authority is too narrow, the exception threshold is incomplete, or the standard is not visible where the work happens.

WHEN THE PROBLEM IS LARGER

From One Decision Pattern to Operational Certainty

If several decision categories keep returning to you, the business may need more than a worksheet. It may need decision architecture.

OPERATIONAL CERTAINTY INSTALLATION

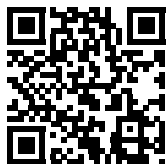
A fixed \$7,500, six-week engagement that identifies where routine decisions still depend on the founder and installs the authority rules, escalation thresholds, and execution standards the team needs to act consistently.

Founder Dependency Diagnostic • Decision Burden Map • Decision Rights Matrix • Workflow Architecture • Escalation Logic
• 90-Day Roadmap

NEXT ACTION

Bring your completed scorecard, decision log, and first-priority worksheet to a diagnostic conversation with Time Bridges.

You do not need to document the whole business. Start with the decisions that keep returning.



QUANTIFY THE COST OF THE BOTTLENECK

Scan to open the Time Bridges Founder Bottleneck Calculator and estimate the annual capacity tied up in interruptions, approvals, and decisions that keep returning to you.

cost-of-chaos.lovable.app